Amendments In the Claims

Please add Claims 20-26. Please amend Claims 3 and 10 as follows:

1.   **(Canceled)**

2.   **(Canceled)**

3.   **(Currently Amended)** The frame structure of claim **10** [[2]], further comprising:
sub-channel information.

4.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 3, wherein said sub-channel information comprises:
a sub-channel identifier, wherein said sub-channel identifier identifies a sub-
channel.

5.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 4, wherein said super-channel information further comprises:
a sub-channel bitmap, wherein each bit in said sub-channel bitmap represents an
operational state of a corresponding sub-channel.

6.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 5, wherein said sub-channel bitmap comprises:
a bit corresponding to an operational state of said sub-channel.

7.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 5, wherein said super-channel information further comprises:
error condition flags, wherein said error condition flags include a forced/manual
switch flag.

8.·   (Original) The frame structure of claim 7, wherein said error condition flags further include a bit-error-rate flag, a loss-of-signal flag and a loss-of-frame flag.

9.   (Canceled)

10.   (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ frame structure **comprising:** ~~of claim 9,~~
~~wherein~~
super-channel information, wherein
          said super-channel information comprises
                    information regarding a super-channel,
                    a super-channel identifier, and
                    ~~said super-channel information further comprises~~ primary
                    enable information, ~~and~~
          said super-channel comprises a plurality of sub-channels linking a
                    first and second network element, and
          said super-channel identifier identifies said super-channel; and
alternate super-channel information, wherein
          said alternate super-channel information comprises
                    an alternate super-channel identifier, and
                    ~~said alternate super-channel information further comprises~~
                    alternate enable information**, and**
          said alternate super-channel identifier identifies an alternate super-
                    channel.

11.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 10, wherein
primary enable information is configured to indicate if said super-channel is
          operational, and
alternate enable information is configured to indicate if said alternate super-
          channel is operational.

12.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 10, wherein

primary enable information comprises primary LSP enable flags, and
alternate enable information comprises alternate LSP enable flags.

13. (Original) The frame structure of claim 12, wherein
said primary LSP enable flags and said alternate LSP enable flags are configured
to indicate which of said super-channel and said alternate super-channel
should carry an LSP.

14. (Original) The frame structure of claim 13, wherein
said primary LSP enable flags are configured to indicate if an LSP should be
carried by said super-channel, and
said alternate LSP enable flags are configured to indicate if said LSP should be
carried by said alternate super-channel.

15. (Original) The frame structure of claim 10, wherein said super-channel
information comprises:
a sub-channel bitmap, wherein each bit in said sub-channel bitmap represents an
operational state of a corresponding sub-channel.

16. (Original) The frame structure of claim 15, wherein said sub-channel
bitmap comprises:
a bit corresponding to an operational state of said sub-channel.

17. (Original) The frame structure of claim 15, wherein said super-channel
information further comprises:
error condition flags, wherein said error condition flags include a forced/manual
switch flag.

18. (Original) The frame structure of claim 4, further comprising:
sub-channel state information, wherein said sub-channel state information
conveys a state of said sub-channel.

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19.   (Original) The frame structure of claim 18, wherein said sub-channel state information conveys a state of a connection between a far-end transmitter and a near-end receiver over said sub-channel.

20.   (New) A frame structure comprising:
super-channel information, wherein
      said super-channel information comprises
            information regarding a super-channel, and
            error condition flags, wherein said error condition flags include a
                forced/manual switch flag, and
      said super-channel comprises a plurality of sub-channels linking a first and
            second network element.

21.   (New) The frame structure of claim 20 wherein said error condition flags further include a bit-error rate flag, a loss-of-signal flag and a loss-of-frame flag.

22.   (New) The frame structure of claim 20, wherein
said super-channel information further comprises a super-channel identifier, and
said super-channel identifier identifies said super-channel.

23.   (New) The frame structure of claim 22 further comprising:
sub-channel information, wherein
      said sub-channel information comprises a sub-channel identifier, and
      said sub-channel identifier identifies a sub-channel of said super-channel.

24.   (New) The frame structure of claim 23 wherein said sub-channel information further comprises:
a sub-channel bitmap wherein each bit in said sub-channel bitmap represents an
      operational state of a corresponding sub-channel.

25.   (New) The frame structure of claim 22 further comprising:
sub-channel state information, wherein

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said sub-channel state information conveys a state of a sub-channel of said super-channel.

26.   (New) The frame structure of claim 25, wherein said state of said sub-channel conveys a state of a connection between a far-end transmitter and a near-end receiver over said sub-channel.